

The Churchill you didn't know

Thousands voted him the greatest Briton - but did they know about his views on Gandhi, gassing and Jews...

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I will not pretend that, if I had to choose between communism and nazism, I would choose communism.

Speaking in the House of Commons, autumn 1937

I do not understand the squeamishness about the use of gas. I am strongly in favour of using poisonous gas against uncivilised tribes.

Writing as president of the Air Council, 1919

It is alarming and nauseating to see Mr Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well known in the east, striding half naked up the steps of the viceregal palace, while he is still organising and conducting a campaign of civil disobedience, to parlay on equal terms with the representative of the Emperor-King.

Commenting on Gandhi's meeting with the Viceroy of India, 1931

(India is) a godless land of snobs and bores.

In a letter to his mother, 1896

I do not admit... that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America, or the black people of Australia... by the fact that a stronger race, a higher grade race... has come in and taken its place.

Churchill to Palestine Royal Commission, 1937

(We must rally against) a poisoned Russia, an infected Russia of armed hordes not only smiting with bayonet and cannon, but accompanied and preceded by swarms of typhus-bearing vermin.

Quoted in the Boston Review, April/May 2001

"The choice was clearly open: crush them with vain and unstinted force, or try to give them what they want. These were the only alternatives and most people were unprepared for either. Here indeed was the Irish spectre - horrid and inexorically.

Writing in The World Crisis and the Aftermath, 1923-31

The unnatural and increasingly rapid growth of the feeble-minded and insane classes, coupled as it is with a steady restriction among all the thrifty, energetic and superior stocks, constitutes a national and race danger which it is impossible to exaggerate... I feel that the source from which the stream of madness is fed should be cut off and sealed up before another year has passed.

Churchill to Asquith, 1910

One may dislike Hitler's system and yet admire his patriotic achievement. If our country were defeated, I hope we should find a champion as admirable to restore our courage and lead us back to our place among the nations."

From his Great Contemporaries, 1937

You are callous people who want to wreck Europe - you do not care about the future of Europe, you have only your own miserable interests in mind. Addressing the London Polish government at a British Embassy meeting, October 1944

So far as Britain and Russia were concerned, how would it do for you to have 90% of Romania, for us to have 90% of the say in Greece, and go 50/50 about Yugoslavia?

Addressing Stalin in Moscow, October 1944

This movement among the Jews is not new. From the days of Spartacus-Weishaupt to those of Karl Marx, and down to Trotsky (Russia), Bela Kun (Hungary), Rosa Luxembourg (Germany), and Emma Goldman (United States)... this worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilisation and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence, and impossible equality, has been steadily growing. It has been the mainspring of every subversive movement during the 19th century; and now at last this band of extraordinary personalities from the underworld of the great cities of Europe and America have gripped the Russian people by the hair of their heads and have become practically the undisputed masters of that enormous empire."

Writing on 'Zionism versus Bolshevism' in the Illustrated Sunday Herald, February 1920

Research by Amy Iggulden

Hello to you, dear reader from Romania!

When the former Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha delivered his New Year message back in 1967, he pulled the cord marked “truth bomb”. “This year will be harder than last year,” he declared. “It will, however, be easier than next year.” I mean ... on the one hand: thanks for not sugar-coating it, Enver. On the other: way to kill the party buzz, you monster!


I don’t want to murder the atmosphere (or indeed any dissidents) by reminding you of the news year you’ve just lived through - or by warning you of the news year you’re about to live through. It’s not big, it’s not clever, and it’s sure as heck not seasonal.

But I will say, pointedly, that our reporting feels particularly necessary in dark times. If you can, please help support the Guardian on a monthly basis from just €2, so as to keep it open for everyone. I can’t tell you how much it would be appreciated. A free press is needed now as much as it has ever been - and on some days, more than it has ever been.

In return for this support, I am formally* bestowing upon you the right to refer to yourself - in conversation, in the pub, and on any business cards you may care to have printed up - as “a newspaper baron”. Face it: if you pay to support a news organisation, then you ARE to all intents and purposes a newspaper baron. Just enjoy it! All the others do.

With that, it simply remains is for me to wish you a very happy holidays, and a splendid new year. Goodness knows you’ve earned it.

Marina Hyde
**not formally*



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